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ABSTRACT

Many recent educational reform efforts are based on the active involvement of administrators, educators, parents, and community members, all stakeholders in decision making. This paper presents findings of a study that investigated communication strategies used by shared decision-making teams in a small suburban school district in New York State serving 3,000 pupils. The study explored communication within the team, between the team and various constituent groups (e.g., parents, community members, teachers, etc.), and across different teams. Interviews were conducted with all members of three building-level shared decision-making teams from a primary school, a middle school, and a high school during the teams' second year of operation. The data point to the importance of a systemic, comprehensive approach to establish structured patterns of communication. Four research questions were addressed: (1) What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the methods used to facilitate coordination and communication between their shared decision making team and other groups engaged in educational reform activities? (2) What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the use of products (e.g., new curriculum goals, results of surveys developed by shared decision making teams, brochures distributed to educators and the community, etc.) produced by other teams engaged in educational reform activities? (3) What do shared decision making team members describe as the methods used to communicate to the constituent groups they represent on their shared decision making team? (4) What do shared decision making team members suggest as effective approaches to improving communication about educational reform efforts in their school district? Results of the study are discussed. The data point to the difficulty of doing school reform in a manner that includes effective communication throughout the system. Five tables are included. (Contains 25 references). (LMI)

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Making Connections in School Reform: An Examination of Communication Strategies[1]

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Making Connections in School Reform: An Examination of Communication Strategies

Recently educators have focused considerable attention on educational reform activities that are based on the active involvement of administrators, educators, parents, and community members (e.g., Comer, 1988; Hoy & Tarter, 1993; Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993; Sizer, 1984). Shared decision making is frequently discussed as a strategy that can facilitate efforts to include these diverse constituent groups in the key decisions that determine substantial changes and future directions concerning educational goals, curriculum, instruction and behavior management. Support for shared decision making and the active involvement of these groups in school reform derives from theory concerning facilitative power and participative decision making (e.g., Hoy & Tarter, 1993; Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993), and follows recommended strategies for implementation (e.g., Bergman, 1992; Lange, 1993).

Despite the fact that there has been limited research regarding shared decision making and educational reform, a number of conclusions are widely accepted in the literature. Group processes and decision making strategies are viewed as important components of educational reform (Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993; Hoy & Tarter, 1993), and there have been some beginning efforts to research these factors (e.g., Meyers, et. al., 1995; Weiss, 1993). It has also been suggested that educational reform requires effective communication between shared decision making teams and other reform teams as well as the constituent groups represented by reform team members (Bondy, Kilgore, Ross, & Webb, 1994; Chapman, 1990; Conley & Goldman, 1994; Curtis & Stollar, 1996; Rutherford & Billig, 1995). Wiggam (1992) emphasized the

importance of effective communication in implementing school reform. Clear communication is thought to be especially important when implementing change from within a system (Curtis & Stollar, 1996).

A systemic perspective (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1989) has been described as an important component of school change (e.g., Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991), and since communication is viewed as a critical factor in effective school change it may be useful to conceptualize communication in school reform from a systemic framework. While many writing about communication in school reform note the importance of effective (Wiggam, 1992), clear (Curtis & Stollar, 1996) and open communication (e.g., Conley & Goldman, 1994; Foster, 1980), there has not been enough attention to communication in school reform has not been studied using a systemic model of school reform. By applying a systemic frame of reference in the present investigation three aspects of communication in educational reform are viewed as important. These include (1) communication within the educational reform team; (2) communication between the educational reform team and various constituent groups (e.g., parents, community members, teachers, etc.); and (3) communication across teams responsible for different aspects of educational reform in the school district. There have been some beginning efforts to conceptualize and investigate methods of communication used within educational reform teams (e.g., Meyers, et. al., 1995; Weiss, 1993). In contrast, there have been few efforts to conceptualize or investigate the remaining two approaches to communication: communication between educational reform teams and constituent groups, and communication across educational reform teams. These two approaches to communication serve as the focus of this research.

Recent descriptions of educational reform efforts have delineated the communication patterns used (Bergman, 1992; Bondy, Kilgore, Ross, & Webb, 1994; Jenlink & Carr, 1996; Slater, 1993; Wiggam, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994; Wohlstetter, 1995). These reform efforts were typically guided initially by shared decision making teams consisting of members such as the principal/administrator, teachers, and frequently parents. One investigation reported that members of shared decision making teams were responsible for communicating reform efforts directly to their constituents, and bringing ideas and reactions back to the team (Bondy, Kilgore, Ross, & Webb, 1994). Newsletters, meetings, and conferences have been cited frequently as methods for coordinating reform efforts within the teams and to their constituents (Bondy et al., 1994; Slater, 1993; Wiggam, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994; Wohlstetter, 1995). Wohlstetter et al. (1994) indicated the importance of disseminating information in a horizontal fashion, where each team member has equal access, rather than from the top down (i.e. from the principal to teachers to parents). Jenlink & Carr (1996) narrowed the focus of communication further by investigating the kinds of conversation that would be most effective in promoting change. That study indicated that open forms of conversation promote the free flow of ideas, allowing constructive relationships to form and promoting effective school reform. This conclusion was supported in research by Bondy, et al. (1994) who maintained that "....open communication is the life blood of successful shared decision making teams... (p.18)."

While there have been some conclusions regarding the communication strategies needed to facilitate educational reform, we were able to locate only four empirical studies investigating this topic (Bondy, et. al., 1994; Slater, 1993; Wohlstetter, et. al., 1994; Wohlstetter, 1995). Three

of these papers give minor attention to communication while focusing primarily on the dynamics of shared decision making (Slater, 1993; Wohlstetter, et. al., 1994; Wohlstetter, 1995). Only one of these studies gave substantial attention to communication which was found to be one of four main components of school reform (Bondy, et. al., 1994). Given the lack of research on this topic there is a limited empirical knowledge base about the specific approaches to communication which are most effective in educational restructuring.

Objectives

The purpose of this research was to fill an important gap in the literature on educational reform by investigating communication strategies used by shared decision making teams. Two elements of communication are examined in this research. First, since educational reform efforts are complex, one goal was to learn about the strategies used to facilitate communication across shared decision making teams and other groups responsible for educational reform efforts in the district. Second, since shared decision making teams consist of administrators, teachers, parents and community members who represent their various groups, another goal was to learn about the strategies used to facilitate communication between shared decision making teams and their constituents. Finally, since communication is often the responsibility of shared decision making team members, this investigation was designed to determine the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning communication strategies in educational reform. Knowledge of team member perceptions may be important in designing communication strategies that will have a realistic chance of being implemented by shared decision making teams.

This investigation addressed the following research questions using open ended

interviews. (1) What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the methods used to facilitate coordination and communication between their shared decision making team and other groups engaged in educational reform activities? (2) What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the use of products (e.g., new curriculum goals, results of surveys developed by shared decision making teams, brochures distributed to educators and the community, etc.) produced by other teams engaged in educational reform activities? (3) What do shared decision making team members describe as the methods used to communicate to the constituent groups they represent on their shared decision making team? (4) What do shared decision making team members suggest as effective approaches to improving communication about educational reform efforts in their school district?

Methods

Context of the Study

The School District. The district under study is a small suburban school district located in the greater capital district of New York State serving approximately 3,000 pupils. It includes four school buildings (primary elementary, intermediate elementary, middle, and high school).

This school district had recently implemented shared decision making teams as a part of their efforts to reform education in the district using the National Goals 2000 (The White House, 1990) and the state wide New Compact for Learning (New York State Education Department, 1991). Based on National Goals 2000 the district formed district wide reform teams for each of the major goals associated with goals 2000. The purpose of these district reform teams was to develop goals for the district associated with having children attend school ready to learn, having

academic goals that are appropriate for helping children enter the job market in the 21st century, and having safe and drug free schools. Based on the New Compact for Learning every school in the state was charged with developing shared decision making teams that had the responsibility of developing methods of implementing the district's goals at each school. Since the building level shared decision making teams were responsible for implementing the goals established by district-wide reform teams, they were the focus of this investigation into communication processes.

The Schools. This district had four schools organized developmentally. The primary elementary school included grades K-2, the intermediate elementary school included grades 3-5, the middle school included grades 6-8, and the high school included grades 9-12. This research investigated the building shared decision making teams from three of these schools: Primary Elementary School, Middle School, and High School.

Involvement of the Researchers. Since 1992, the school district and researchers have been studying shared decision making and educational reform to determine the impact of education reform on students with disabilities. As a part of a multi-layered research investigation including observing, taping, transcribing and coding team meetings, interviewing and conducting surveys, the researchers worked as participant observers on the building level shared decision making teams as well as the district-wide reform teams.

Sample

The present investigation interviewed all members of three building level shared decision making teams from a primary school, middle school and high school during the teams' second year of operation. Theses teams were comprised of the school principal, team leaders, teachers,

parents, and students. The primary school team consisted of nine members (three classroom teachers, two educators responsible for staff development in the school, one remedial reading teacher, two parents, and the building principal). The middle school team consisted of 13 members (nine teachers, one educator responsible for staff development, one parent, and two administrators). The high school team consisted of 10 members (five teachers, two parents, two students, and the building principal). All members of these three building level shared decision making teams were interviewed by the researchers (N = 32).

Generally the parent members of these shared decision making teams had the responsibility of representing the parent organization in their school, teachers were responsible for representing other teachers from their school, and the student members of the high school team were responsible for representing the student body. The primary school and middle school teams had more structured approaches to establishing communication with constituent groups when compared with the high school team. The teachers were selected for these two shared decision making teams so that they would represent the teachers at their grade level team. To accomplish this goal, the three teacher representatives on the primary school team (one kindergarten, one first grade, one second grade) were each responsible for communicating with their grade level team at its regular meetings. The middle school team used a more comprehensive approach. Two teachers on the team represented each grade level team and three represented the special areas team which included special education, pupil personnel services, physical education, music and art. In contrast, the teachers on the high school team represented teachers in general rather than a particular grade level.

Data Sources

The data used in this investigation were collected based on open ended interviews with each team member at the end of these teams' second year of operation (i.e., during May and June). Interviews were conducted by three school of education faculty from local universities with prior interviewing experience who had been involved with the district's reform efforts for a three–year period and who served as a participant-observer on one of the teams. In each instance, building level shared decision making team members were interviewed by the participant observer who worked with the team to capitalize on previously established knowledge and rapport. This interview asked a range of questions regarding general reform activities in the district. The responses to interview questions analyzed for the purposes of this research contained information relevant to the four research questions as follows.

The first research question sought to determine the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the methods used to facilitate coordination and communication between their shared decision making team and other groups engaged in educational reform activities. The following two interview questions were used to address this issue. (1a) "What is the nature of the connections that occur between your shared decision making team and other educational reform teams in the district?" (1b) "How does your shared decision making team communicate with other educational reform teams in the district?"

The second research question sought to determine the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the use of products (e.g., new curriculum goals, results of surveys developed by shared decision making teams, brochures distributed to educators and the

community, etc.) produced by other teams engaged in educational reform activities. The following interview question was used to address this issue. (2) "Does your shared decision making team make use of products developed by other educational reform teams in the district?"

The third research question sought to determine what shared decision making team members describe as the methods used to communicate to the constituent groups they represent on their shared decision making team. The following interview question was used to address this issue. (3) "How do you communicate about the building planning team with your constituent group(s)?"

The fourth research question sought to determine the suggestions made by shared decision making team members regarding effective approaches to improving communication about educational reform efforts in their school district. The following interview question was used to address this issue. (4) "What can be done to facilitate the most effective communication with your constituent group about goals 2000 and your shared decision making team?"

Data from these interview questions were analyzed using procedures developed previously (Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelich, & Gallagher, 1990). First, the responses to each of these questions were reviewed in a sample of interviews by a research assistant who developed a tentative coding manual with categories reflecting the observed responses. These interviews and categories were then checked by one of the interviewers until agreement was reached regarding the categories that reflected the responses. These categories, derived from the data, were then used as a basis for coding all of the interviews. Each interview was coded independently by these two researchers. Interrater agreement was 95% for the interview questions used in this research. In all instances

where there was a disagreement the two coders reached agreement about the correct category. In addition to coding all responses using the categories from the coding manual, verbatim examples from the interviews are used to illustrate some of the key findings in this research.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the methods used to facilitate coordination and communication between their shared decision making team and other groups engaged in educational reform activities?

As indicated in the methods, two interview questions (1a and 1b) were used to address the first research question. Interview question 1a asked about the nature of the connections that occur between the interviewee's shared decision making team and other educational reform teams in the district and the results for this question are presented in Table 1.

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insert Table 1 about here

A key element of this district's approach to educational reform was its use of National Goals 2000 as a framework for changing educational goals and instruction. Table 1 provides some support for this assumption as about 40% of those interviewed indicated that National Goals 2000 served as an integrating factor for the district's educational reform efforts. This helped the diverse shared decision making teams in the district focus on common goals.

Two other factors that were viewed as facilitating connections between the shared decision making teams in this district should be noted. About one fourth of the shared decision

making team members indicated that having members cross represented on a number of district reform teams helped to facilitate connections between these teams and a similar number suggested that the shared decision making team leaders (who had monthly meetings with team leaders from other shared decision making teams) helped to facilitate connections between teams. One respondent indicated, however, that while monthly team leader meetings were a source of connection across teams, it was difficult to make the entire team aware of what was happening in other teams: "The only real connection is when a team leader attends meetings to discuss what is happening in other buildings. But this information isn't relayed back to all faculty members. It would take another meeting for the team leader to explain to the team what's going on in the other two buildings. Each team has their own charge, their own direction".

Table 1 indicates that a number of respondents noted that efforts to establish connections between district reform teams and school shared decision making teams was a weakness of this district's educational reform efforts or that they were unaware of such efforts. For example, one respondent stated: "I don't know if the Goals 2000 members (i.e., district reform team members) think in terms of implementation or if it is their function. Communication with those teams is probably not all it could be." Another stated: "I don't think the shared decision making teams in this district are strongly connected because each building is different in the composition of students...the age. Each building has its own individual goals." Finally, one educator stated: "The only thing I think that may become confusing is who is doing what and when because there is so much going on now. No one can keep track of everything that is going on. Sometimes we lose the big picture. I don't know everything going on at the primary School and vice versa."

The second question (i.e., 1b) addressing the first research purpose asked how the interviewee's shared decision making team communicated with other educational reform teams in the district. The results from the analysis of the responses to this question are presented in Table 2.

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insert Table 2 about here

Providing administrative support to key people involved in reform was viewed as an effective mechanism for facilitating communication about educational reform. For example, similar to some of the responses to question 1a, a substantial number of respondents (i.e., over 20%) indicated that the regular support sessions held by the district administration for the team leaders of the shared decision making teams (i.e.,district-wide team leader meetings) and for the district's staff developers (i.e.,district-wide project leaders meetings) helped to facilitate communication across teams.

The shared decision making team members were responsible for communicating to their constituency group as described in the methods section of this paper (i.e., parents to parents, teachers to teachers, etc.). This was viewed by a number of respondents (i.e., almost 20%) as an important factor facilitating communication about educational reform in this district. However, it is noteworthy that most of those making this response were from the Middle School which had the most comprehensive approach to ensuring communication between team members and their constituent groups. In contrast, while a substantial number of respondents viewed the distribution

of minutes across teams as an important method of communication, most of these responses came from high school team members who did not have a structured method for communication to constituent groups of educators.

While there were few negative responses to this question, one of these responses was particularly important given the large number of people working on educational reform in this school district. This respondent stated: "It is difficult to communicate because there are so many committees and so many levels of reform occurring in this district."

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of shared decision making team members concerning the use of products (e.g., new curriculum goals, results of surveys developed by shared decision making teams, brochures distributed to educators and the community, etc.) produced by other teams engaged in educational reform activities?

The results for this question are reported in Table 3. A substantial number of the shared decision making team members were not aware of the materials developed by other groups in the district involved in educational reform as almost half of the respondents answered this question by saying they did not know. For example, one respondent stated: "I've never been aware of what was happening on other committees. I didn't realize they did anything." Another stated, "Teams are centered on their own projects."

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insert Table 3 about here

Some team members did indicate that their teams made use of products from other teams

such as the report from the Academic Goals 2000 team, a drug survey that was developed by the Safe and Drug Free Schools team, and the resource directory brochure developed by the team focused on children coming to school ready to learn. However, often these responses indicated that while the respondents knew about other teams' products or helped to develop them, they rarely indicated that they actually used the finished product to influence the educational process.

Further, often team members were only likely to report knowledge about another team's products if there was a team member who served on both groups. Support for this conclusion is found in Table 3 where it is reported that almost all of the respondents referring to the drug survey were on the middle school shared decision making team which had a member who also served on the District Safe and Drug Free Schools Reform Team. Similarly, all but one of the respondents referring to the brochure containing a resource directory that was developed by the district reform team responsible for children coming to school ready to learn were from the primary school shared decision making team which had three people who served on both teams.

Research Question 3: What do shared decision making team members describe as the methods used to communicate to the constituent groups they represent on their shared decision making team? The primary categories of responses that were obtained from this question are summarized in Table 4. Formal verbal communication such as discussions at group meetings, reports as a regular part of meeting agendas, etc. and written communication such as sharing minutes and reports were each reported by close to half of the respondents as approaches to communication by the members of these shared decision making teams. Another type of written communication observed in this research was the use of bulletin boards and story boards to communicate about

reform activities. For example, the primary school shared decision making team designated a bulletin board to highlight shared decision making team activities. This bulletin board included a pocket folder containing recent minutes and agendas from the meetings to attract the attention of school personnel and parents. In addition, these teams used story boards which delineated the steps, time line and progress made by teams carrying out specific reform tasks.

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insert Table 4 about here

It is noteworthy that most of the responses indicating that formal verbal communication was used were made by members of the Middle School team, since this team was structured most carefully so that the membership represented particular subgroups of teachers (i.e., grade level teams and teams of special area teachers). For example, one Middle School respondent stated: "We have weekly team meetings and we are always on the agenda." Similarly, it is noteworthy that the High School had only one respondent who made this type of response, as this team did not have a clear system in which team members represented various subgroups of teachers. Informal approaches to communication such as discussions in hallways, teachers' lounge, etc. were also reported by about one third of the respondents.

In addition, about one fourth of the respondents indicated that poor communication with constituent groups was a weakness of their shared decision making team. For example, with regard to communication with other teachers, one respondent stated: "When I'm asked about what the team does and I start to explain, I find immediate lack of interest. They don't understand

what it is about." Another team member discussed the problems of communicating with parents: "I would like to involve parents more. It is difficult with so little participation at PTA meetings. Maybe a regular mailing would help. Better communication with parents is needed and more input from parents is needed." Finally, another respondent was concerned that "...no time is built into the schedule for this (i.e., communication with constituents)."

Research Question 4: What do shared decision making team members suggest as effective approaches to improving communication about educational reform efforts in their school district?

The responses to the fourth research question are summarized in Table 5. One important suggestion was to structure the shared decision making team meetings (9% of respondents) and meetings of constituent groups such as parents and grade level teams of teachers (41%) so that communication about educational reform and the constituent group was a regular component of these meetings. For example, one suggestion for the shared decision making teams was to add to the agenda a time at the end of the meeting to summarize what topics from the meeting need to be communicated to constituent groups as well as a time to discuss reports from constituent groups. Similarly, it was suggested that meetings of constituent groups (e.g., faculty meetings, PTO meetings, and meetings of grade level teachers) include school reform as a regular part of their agenda.

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insert Table 5 about here

Other frequent suggestions were to use written communication (i.e., exchange of minutes,

agendas, and team reports) and verbal communication (i.e., verbal reports to the faculty, parents and community members) strategies more frequently. Other potentially important but less frequently mentioned suggestions included more contact among teams and increased communication with constituent group members. In addition, it was suggested that there is a need for more careful definition of the roles/goals of teachers, administrators and shared decision making teams in educational reform.

Discussion

This research underscores the importance of communication strategies in educational reform. Educational reform is a complex activity that generally involves a range of people from the district, the building and the community. It is difficult to sustain reform initiatives unless all relevant groups are kept informed about reform initiatives. A number of the specific findings have implications for researchers and practitioners interested in implementing and sustaining effective educational reform.

It has been suggested previously that effective school reform requires a vision that is communicated throughout the system (Conley and Goldman, 1994; Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991; Meyers et al., 1995) along with a systemic framework that considers all elements of school reform. The present research provides some support for this viewpoint by illustrating the difficulty of communicating across educational reform teams along with some potentially effective approaches. For example, meetings designed to provide administrative support to team leaders of shared decision making teams and to district personnel responsible for staff development were viewed as effective strategies for facilitating communication across shared decision making teams.

While this was not the goal of these meetings, the finding suggests that these types of meetings can be structured to facilitate communication across educational reform teams. However, one respondent suggested that for this type of strategy to be maximized steps must be taken to ensure that all team members are informed about what is learned at such cross team meetings.

When considering the present data relevant to communication across teams, the importance of a systemic perspective becomes apparent. The data in Table 4 illustrate that most of the people reporting some knowledge of the drug survey were from the middle school shared decision making team which coincidentally had a member who also served on the district reform team responsible for developing the drug survey. Similarly, most of the people reporting some knowledge of the Academic Goals 2000 report were from the high school shared decision making team which happened to have a member who served on the district reform team focused on Academic Goals. This communication occurred largely as a result of chance when team members happened to be cross represented on multiple teams. A more comprehensive approach to implementing reform from a systemic perspective would have been needed to establish structured communication patterns that would have ensured knowledge about and use of these products throughout the school system.

While these reform efforts may not have included a sufficiently comprehensive or systematic approach to systemic reform, it is important to recognize that the district did emphasize a systemic view of its reform efforts. There is some evidence in these data that this had limited positive effects. The district's use of National Goals 2000 as an organizing structure for its reform efforts helped to promote consistency in the efforts of various shared decision making

teams in the school district. This finding supports the assumption that has been discussed in the literature concerning the need for a school–wide or district–wide vision to facilitate systemic educational reform efforts (Conley & Goldman, 1994; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). However, as noted above, it is important to tie this systemic vision to structured efforts at communication throughout the district.

Shared decision making team members need to be clear that part of their role is to obtain input from and to provide information to their constituent groups about educational reform activities. This replicates prior findings suggesting that this is an important component of effective communication (e.g., Chapman, 1990; Conley & Goldman, 1994; Rutherford & Billig, 1995). However, an important contribution of the present research is its findings about effective approaches to communicating with constituent groups. For example, this research found that communication about educational reform should be a regular component of the agenda of meetings held by shared decision making teams and meetings held by constituent groups such grade level teams, special educators, parent groups, etc. This type of structure in meetings can help to ensure meaningful communication between educational reform teams and constituent groups, rather than just hoping for such communication to occur. These findings about communication with constituent groups are particularly important because of the potential for communication to overcome the previously documented problem that constituents (e.g., parents, community members, special education teachers, etc.) often feel ignored by those involved in educational reform (Brown, 1990; Meyers, et. al. 1995; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992).

While many of these findings have potentially important implications for facilitating

effective communication as a component of educational reform efforts, it should also be noted that a substantial number of shared decision making team members had limited information about communication strategies. Some of the critical responses obtained point to important ways in which the communication efforts were ineffective at creating effective links between reform teams. Moreover, all of our research on school reform conducted in this school district suggests that educational reform is a complex process that requires a great deal of time. Many team members were concerned that actively involved teachers were in danger of burn out and that people were so busy that it was often easy to ignore important and basic approaches to communication. These findings suggest the need for effective methods of communication throughout districts undergoing educational reform so that different reform groups can benefit from each other's efforts. These issues require greater attention both in research and practice.

These data point to the difficulty of doing school reform in a manner that includes effective communication throughout the system. Teachers are very busy, many get involved with multiple activities throughout the school district, and in this district the result was a large number of teachers who were spread too thin. As a result it can be difficult to find time for the communication that is needed and it is difficult to sustain reform initiatives. Ongoing support from administration is essential.

This research contributes to the literature by providing a more detailed research base about communication in educational reform than has been available previously. The use of open ended interviews helped to clarify the perspectives of reform team members, however, there is a need for more research in this area to replicate these findings with a larger more representative

sample of educational reformers.

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Table 1
Perceptions of Shared Decision Making Team Members Regarding Connection to Other Teams

	Primary (n=9)	Middle (n=13)	HS (n=10)	Total (n=32)
	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	%(Freq)
Goals 2000 provides connections	33 (3)	54 (7)	30 (3)	41 (13)
Cochairs provide connections	22 (2)	56 (5)	30 (3)	31 (10)
Negative response	44 (4)	31 (4)	10 (1)	28 (9)
Team members on multiple teams	33 (3)	31 (4)	10 (1)	25 (8)
Written communication from other teams		31 (4)	40 (4)	25 (8)
Board of education presentations	11 (1)	15 (2)		9 (3)
Through PTA Meetings	11 (1)	8 (1)		6 (2)
Oral presentations from team member to constituency group	11 (1)	8 (1)		6 (2)
Do not know			20 (2)	6 (2)

Table 2
How does your shared decision making team Communicate with other Teams?

	Primary (n=9)	Middle (n=13)	HS (n=10)	Total (n=32)
	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	%(Freq)
Minutes to all teams	11 (1)	23 (3)	60 (6)	31 (10)
Meetings of SDM Team Cochairs	22 (2)	31 (4)	20 (2)	25 (8)
Project leaders meetings	22 (2)	15 (2)	30 (3)	22 (7)
Report to constituents (e.g., PTA)	11 (1)	38 (5)		19 (6)
SDM team members on multiple teams	11 (1)	31 (4)		16 (5)
Infromal communication	22 (2)	23 (3)		16 (5)
Written Communication	11 (1)	23 (3)		13 (4)
Critical response	22 (2)	15 (2)		13 (4)
Don't Know		8 (1)	20 (2)	9 (3)
Principals Meetings	11 (1)		10 (1)	6 (2)

Table 3
Does your Shared Decision Making Team Make use of Products from other Teams?

	Primary (n=9)	Middle (n=13)	HS (n=10)	Total (n=32)
	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	%(Freq)
Don't Know	55 (5)	46 (6)	30 (3)	44 (14)
Academic Goals 2000 Report	11 (1)	23 (3)	60 (6)	31 (10)
Drug Survey		31 (4)	10 (1)	16 (5)
Critical Response	11 (1)	15 (2)	10 (1)	13 (4)
Booklet/Questionnaire Passed out at Kindergarten Screening	22 (2)	8 (1)		9 (3)

Table 4

How do you Communicate about the Building Planning Team with your Constituent Group?

	Primary (n=9)	Middle (n=13)	HS (n=10)	Total (n=32)
	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)
Verbal Communication	33 (3)	100 (13)	10 (1)	53 (17)
Written Communication	33 (3)	54 (7)	30 (3)	41 (13)
Informal Communication	56 (5)	8 (1)	50 (5)	34 (11)
Critical response	22 (2)	15 (2)	30 (3)	22 (7)

Table 5
What can be done to facilitate the most effective Communication with your Constituent Group about Goals 2000 and the Building Planning team?

	Primary (n=9)	Middle (n=13)	HS (n=10)	Total (n=32)
	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	% (Freq)	%(Freq)
Written Communication	44 (4)	46 (6)	40 (4)	44 (13)
On agenda for meetings of constituent groups	56 (5)	53 (7)	10 (1)	41 (13)
Verbal Communication	11 (1)		40 (4)	16 (5)
Increase Involvement	11 (1)	8 (1)	20 (2)	13 (4)
Communication on agenda of the Share Decision Making Team	22 (2)	8 (1)		9 (3)
More Contact Among Teams	11 (1)	8 (1)	10 (1)	9 (3)
Define Roles/Goals of educators and Shared Decision Making Teams in reform	11 (1)	8 (1)	10 (1)	9 (3)
Ccommunicate with constituent groups	11 (1)		10 (1)	6 (2)
Negative Response	11 (1)	8 (1)		6 (2)